

## Identification and Analysis of the Signed Works of Mohammad Bāqer Jahānmiri (The Shīrāz Painter and Tile Painter, during the Pahlavi Era)

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### Introduction

Tile Painters artists in Shīrāz played an essential role in preserving Qājār traditions and restoring historical buildings during the Pahlavi era. Among them, Moḥammad Bāqer Jahānmiri (1883-1959), known as "Hāji Moḥammad Bāqer-e-Naqāsh" or "Hāji Bāqer," a tile painter, stained glass artist, stucco artist, and mural conservationist of the Pahlavi era in Shīrāz, kept the legacy of the tile Painting alive and worked tirelessly to preserve it until the very end of his life. His works stood out due to his skill in painting and his complete familiarity with ceramic techniques during his time. However, these works have been less studied and categorized. One of the reasons for this is the small number of his works with figures, and another is the shade of tile painters such as Mirzā Abd al-Razzāq Kashipaz (1867-1937 or 38).

### Research Method

The current research deals with the "interpretive-historical strategy" and an analytical approach to describe, recognize, and study the works and life of Moḥammad Bāqer Jahānmiri, and its final goal is to reach a "monograph." Parts of the necessary data are collected from library sources, and an essential part of the documentation is the result of fieldwork and photography that produced first-hand data and had no previous traces in the research. Since the reference to unsigned tiles reduces the accuracy of the results, only signed tiles have been used as the basis for analysis and classification, and the presentation of samples without signs or those attributed to him has been avoided. Undoubtedly, some signed tiles may be kept in private buildings or personal collections; therefore, access to them was impossible in this research. The research questions are as follows: (a) at what intervals can Jahānmiri's artistic life be divided? (b) Who were his supporters, colleagues, and students? (c) What are the categories of his works and the prevalent themes?

### Research Findings

The artistic life of Moḥammad Bāqer can be divided into three general periods: the first period is the "Qājār period," the second period is the "Rezā Shāh Pahlavi" and the third period is "the Moḥammad Rezā Shāh Pahlavi period." Unfortunately, an essential part of the painter Haji Moḥammad Bāqer's artistic life was spent in the turmoil caused by the Persian Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911), the First World War (1914-1918), and the Tremendous Iranian Famine (1917-1919). The names of the masters and workshops he gained experience during the first period of his artistic life have not been mentioned, but it seems that the beginning of his artistic life must be in the era of Muzaffar al-Din Shāh. But so far, no significant works of him related to the Qājār period have been found, and there is no document of his collaboration with any tile workshops in that period. The Rezā Shāh

Pahlavi era is the second period of Moḥammad Bāqer's artistic life. This short period (1925-1941/ 16 years) can be considered the time when many of his important works were created with Qājār's theme and were less affected by the social and political developments of the time. His employers and supporters in this period were folks and wealthy people who owned public buildings. The third period of Moḥammad Bāqer's artistic life is the Moḥammad Rezā Shāh Pahlavi period. This period is from 1925 until he died in 1959 (18 years). In these days and ages, most of his activities are to carry out essential orders, primarily government employers. The signed works identified by Moḥammad Bāqer Jahānmiri so far, and I observed them from close inspection or documentation, include 14 works that belong to the second and third periods of his artistic life during the Pahlavi era. Signed items can be classified into 5 groups in terms of location:

- a) Works in residential buildings: Sa'dat and Towhidi houses and tiles on the front of an unspecified house in Shīrāz;
- b) Works in religious buildings: Wakil Mosque, Jame Atiq Mosque, Siyavshān Mosque, Imamzāde Seyyed Tajuddin Qarib, Imamzade Ibrahim and Aghā Bābā Khān School;
- c) Works in commercial buildings: Haj Naser Korhani bazaar;
- d) The works in the monuments: Qorān Gate and Sa'di Tomb;
- e) The works in health and treatment buildings: Jawanmardi bath and the entrance of Namāzi hospital.

Compared to masters such as Mirzā Abd al-Razzāq, his signed method shows that Jahānmiri used his name in many cases in a small, simple, and uncomplicated way. This issue can represent his humble and blushing character.

### **Conclusion**

In this research, 14 of his signed tiles have been identified, which include a variety of residential, religious, commercial, and memorial buildings. Most of his works with figures from religious buildings and monuments are placed at the end of his life. The available evidence shows that Jahānmiri did not collaborate with any other tile painter except Karim Faqfouri, and there is no indication of the number of other painters who worked under him in his works. However, plaster painters and tile painters were trained in his workshop, some of which are known in the oral history of Shirāz artists. The classification of his signed tiles shows that these works can be placed in 6 groups, including "floral and bird motif (Gol-o-Morgh)," "Antiquity," "Iconography & portraiture," "Europeanized motives," "Imaginary painting," and "Tile-Epigraphy." Flower and bird tiles and floral motifs can be seen in almost all works and periods of his artistic life. The analysis of the theme of his tile paintings, in general, suggests four ideas as the ideas governing the works. These cases include "Europeanized motifs" (in the design of buildings, landscapes, and Western sceneries), "Religious motifs" (in the portraits of religious narratives and Shi'ite figures), "Ancient Iranian motifs" (in the design of scenes and figures from the Achaemenid and Sassanid dynasties), and "Motifs derived from Iranian painting" (in the design of floral and bird motifs and plant patterns). Further studies can validate and verify other tiles attributed to Jahānmiri based on the design and artistic features governing his works with figures, which hopefully would be noticed by others.

**Keywords:** Tile painters, Seven-color Tiles (Haft Rang), Moḥammad Bāqer Jahānmiri, Pahlavi, Shīrāz.